

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
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FM USMISSION USUN NY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2655
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 0650

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UNSC, IS, LE, SY, XF
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN LEBANON

REF: STATE 49215

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: USYG BRIAN URQUHART REACTED TO OUR BRIEFING (REFTEL) BY NOTING HE WAS UNDER IMPRESSION FROM LEBANESE PERM REP THAT PROPOSAL FOR UN FORCE WAS IN ABEYANCE. URQUHART DOUBTED IT WOULD MATERIALIZE, BUT NONETHELESS THE SECRETARIAT HAD PREPARED A PRELIMINARY CONTINGENCY PAPER CALLING FOR APPROXIMATELY 2,000 TROOPS PLUS CIVIL POLICE. HE WONDERED WHETHER ARAB STATES AND PLO WOULD NOT OPPOSE IT. UN HEADQUARTERS HAS NOT APPROACHED GEN. SIILASVUO AS YET. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING OUR PRESENTATION OF BRIEFING POINTS (REFTEL), URQUHART REMARKED THAT LEBANESE PERM REP GHORRA DURING CALL ON SYG MARCH 4 HAD BEEN QUITE NEGATIVE ON SUGGESTION OF A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE AND HAD INDICATED THAT
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SUGGESTION HAD BEEN PLACED IN ABEYANCE. URQUHART SAID NONETHELESS THE SECRETARIAT LAST WEEK PREPARED A PRELIMINARY PAPER WHICH CONTAINED A NUMBER OF UNANSWERED BUT ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS, VIZ., WOULD SARKIS GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY GET AROUND TO ASKING FOR A UN FORCE AND WOULD THE PALESTINIANS, SYRIANS AND ISRAELIS AGREE TO IT. AT THIS POINT, WE PROVIDED

THE GIST OF ALLON'S INITIAL REACTION AS PROVIDED IN TEL AVIV 1614. URQUHART THEN PULLED OUT THE JURUSALEM POST MARCH 2 AND READ SECTIONS AS CONTAINED TEL AVIV 1514, COMMENTING THAT THE POST OFTEN REFLECTS OFFICIAL GOI VIEWPOINTS DESPITE THE USUAL DISCLAIMERS.

3. CONTINUING IN A SPECULATIVE VEIN, URQUHART SAID HE THOUGHT THE SOVIET REACTION MIGHT BE NEGATIVE, BUT HE HAD NOT LEARNED OF A SOVIET ATTITUDE AS YET. THE MOST IMPORTANT REACTION WOULD BE THAT OF ARAB LEADERS WHOM SARKIS AND BOUTROS WERE NOW SEEING IN CAIRO. URQUHART CONJECTURED THAT A UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WOULD HAVE TO BE ASSEMBLED QUICKLY AND PRESUMABLY COULD BUILD ON UNTSO. ON THE PRACTICAL SIDE, PUTTING TOGETHER SUCH A FORCE SHOULD NOT BE VERY DIFFICULT: UNTSO OBSERVERS COULD BE INCREASED TO 90 PLUS 3 CONTINGENTS (ONE CHRISTIAN, ONE MUSLIM AND A THIRD--FOR EXAMPLE A SWEDISH, OR IRANIAN, AND A NEPLAESE) OF BATTALION SIZE OF ABOUT 600 MEN EACH. A CIVIL POLICE ELEMENT WHICH MIGHT BE LEBANESE WOULD ALSO BE REQUIRED.

4. URQUHART SAID AND REPEATED THAT THE QUESTION OF A UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON HAD NOT BEEN REFERRED TO GEN. SIILASVUO AS YET TO AVOID "STIRRING UP THINGS IN THE FIELD" BEFORE THE TIME WAS RIPE. A UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WOULD HAVE TO BE LARGER THAN UNDOF GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE TERRAIN THERE AS WELL AS THE LIKELY EXPANDED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MANDATE. NEXT STEPS WOULD BE FOR THE REQUEST TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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MADE BY GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON, THEN THE ASSURANCE OF COOPERATION FROM ALL THOSE CONCERNED WOULD BE NEEDED, FOLLOWED BY AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

5. AS TO A POLITICAL FUNCTION ATTACHED TO THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE, URQUHART THOUGHT POLITICAL OFFICERS WOULD BE NEEDED INITIALLY BUT THE UNTSO ELEMENTS WERE ACCUSTOMED TO DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND MINOR DISPUTES. THEIR EXPERIENCE WOULD BE VALUABLE IN THE EVENT A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE WERE TO BE ESTABLISHED. URQUHART SPECULATED THAT IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO RECRUIT CONTINGENTS SINCE GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE NERVOUS IN HAVING THEIR TROOPS "GETTING ACROSS" SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS AND CHRISTIANS. AT THE SAME TIME, GIVEN THE DIFFICULT TERRAIN AND CONFUSION OF HOSTILITIES IN THE AREA, THE SAMLL NUMBER OF TROOPS WOULD BE INCABABLE OF PLAYING A STRAIGHT MILITARY ROLE AND SHOULD BE PLANNED FOR THAT.

6. A SPECIAL INGREDIENT WOULD BE CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE

UN TROOPS AND THE CIVIL POLICE. URQUHART POINTED OUT THAT UN FORCES CANNOT ARREST PERSONS SINCE THE UN HAS NO AUTHORITY TO TRY THE ARRESTED. URQUHART CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT AN ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR HIS SKEPTICISM THAT THIS PROPOSAL WILL EVER MATERIALIZE IS THAT THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY FAILED ATTEMPTS (1958, 1971) TO INVOLVE UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES IN LEBANON IN THE PAST.
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